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THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN INDONESIA : PARTNER, PASTOR, PROPHET ?
Some attitudes observed, with special reference to East Timor

ABSTRACT

This paper is written in the light of recent personal visits to the Church in Indonesia. in particular Irian Jaya and West Timor (1996), and to the Church in East Timor (1995, 1996).

The paper begins with a brief definition of terms in which the distinction between three roles of the Church as 'pastor', 'prophet' and 'partner', and their practical overlapping, is noted. The concern of the Church to fulfil its particular mission responsibility, and therefore the need of the ecclesial institution to survive, is remarked upon.

Brief reference is then made to a succession of political developments within Indonesia, impacting in due course upon both West Papua ('Irian Jaya') and East Timor, and the response of the Church in Indonesia to those developments. *Viz.:*
The emergence and growth of the movement for Indonesian Independence; the Proclamation Constitution and *Panca Sila*; the periods of 'Liberal' and of 'Guided' Democracy; the acquisition of the territory of West Papua; the '30th September Movement' and the subsequent effort to eliminate the Communist Party of Indonesia; the priorities and practice of the *Orde Baru* Government; the invasion, annexation, and 'development' of Portuguese Timor.

Links are made with more recent happenings in Indonesia, West Papua and East Timor - There are short excerpts of, or allusions to, a few official statements of the Church and some private opinions in respect of these events.

The paper seeks to provide examples of the ways in which the Church in Indonesia, pursuing its primarily spiritual purpose, effects its pastoral care by acting both in partnership with the Government of the day, and as its critic. The opinion is ventured that such a balance, admittedly difficult, is not always perfectly achieved. Whether there is room for improvement, and how it might be made, is left an open question.

Patrick A. Smythe
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The mission of the Catholic Church in Indonesia can be perceived as having three dimensions. It devotes itself to a pastoral ministry; it seeks to make a positive contribution as a partner in the building of the nation; and it aspires to fulfil its responsibility as a prophetical - that is, critical - presence in society. This distinction is useful in evaluating the Church's ministry although in practice the three activities inevitably merge and even generate one another.

In the context of the Church's beliefs, to exercise the role of **pastor** means to share in the 'redeeming work' of Christ who leads humanity from a situation of sin to one of grace, from sickness to health, from death to life, from time into eternity. The ministry of the Church as an institution, and of its individual pastors, is to effect in the human family an increasing orientation towards and participation in the life and love of God, and to keep at bay whatever threatens to prevent progress on that journey to the fullness of being. This properly includes the improvement of present circumstances, but is not limited to any historical project, however worthy. The Church is to be concerned with 'integral' human development which includes spiritual health as well as material well being and which looks beyond the current experience, however significant, to a future which is expected to transcend it.

Thus the Church will identify with all efforts to enhance human welfare, and will co-operate with the secular powers engaged in such an endeavour. It will become a **partner** in 'nation-building' if this means individual or social betterment, increased security for all, and more generous mutual service. But it will not, or should not, go along with the pursuit of national ambitions which disadvantage or imperil other human communities. It will not, or should not, become a mere instrument of secular policy, though such an enlistment will likely be attempted by those currently in power. Nor can it be true to its calling if it becomes preoccupied with the affairs of this world alone, however pressing these may be. Indeed it can be argued that the Church must be willing to forgo action in response to certain immediate human needs even though such local action may be deemed entirely proper, and is even expected, so that it does not jeopardise the pursuit of its larger and 'long term' agenda. The Church must be concerned with its own **survival** in the world, for the world's sake. Such demanding responsibilities can conflict and have brought the Church into some painful dilemmas. Maybe the decisions made have not always been the right ones, or the best ones. Perhaps, if it is to be truly faithful in its discipleship and to its mission, the Church should be less anxious about self-defence and be more ready to put its own life on the line for humanity's sake?

The Church carries out its role as **prophet** in the first instance by continually recalling the faithful to true Christian discipleship and to the wholehearted observance of their religious duties with a view to their ultimate destiny. The Church does not have a political message or purpose. The Church should, and does, endeavour to avoid political partisanship. But it is a participant in human social affairs, and is itself a society with political significance. Furthermore the Gospel values by which it tries to live mandate the Church to do all it can to defend human dignity and promote human development and so require the Church to be engaged in the political arena. Thus it is duty bound to comment objectively and dispassionately on the prevailing situation, pointing to the way things are going and the implications for human welfare both in the present and for the future. Such a commentary can amount to a warning in respect of inherent dangers, or it might draw attention to promising opportunities. The exercise of its prophetical ministry may require the Church to criticise, or to challenge, to seek to restrain some kinds of activity in the body politic - or to encourage others. When the Church undertakes such a responsibility conscientiously it inevitably evokes a reaction from the secular authority, and reveals both the strength and the vulnerability of the Church in society. Thus the prophetical role has to be carried out judiciously - with courage, prudence, and sensitivity - if it is to be both effective in the present and sustained in the long term.

These are the roles which the Catholic Church in Indonesia has tried to perform - to be pastor, prophet, and a partner in the building of the nation. This paper attempts to scan that history in the twentieth century and invites comment upon the relative success or failure of the Church in fulfilling these heavy responsibilities which bear directly upon the present and future welfare of the Indonesian nation, and upon that of the people of East Timor.

In 1908 the first significant nationalist movement in Indonesia *Budi Utomo*, 'Noble Endeavour', was inaugurated. At its outset this was concerned with Javanese cultural development but political aspirations for independence from Dutch sovereignty soon began to find expression within its membership. The then small Catholic community in Java identified with its advocacy of freedom of religion, a policy which seemed to offer the Church some protection in a pluralist but predominantly Muslim society. However, it was not long before the 'neutral' stance of *Budi Utomo* regarding religion was felt to be an inadequate safeguard of Catholic interests and in 1917 the Provisional Catholic Committee for Political Action was formed. This declared its purpose to be 'the greater participation of the people in the administration of the country and a gradual preparation for self-government under the supreme authority of the Netherlands'[1], but it certainly aimed to ensure that Catholic welfare was protected. This association led in turn to the foundation of the *Indische Katholicke Partij (IKP)*, Catholic Party for the Indies, for Javanese and ex-patriate Dutch Catholics and the withdrawal from membership of *Budi Utomo*.

In 1918, when a 'Revision Committee' was formed by the Dutch colonial authorities to advise on a new form of local Government which would safeguard the rights of the native people, and bestow upon them more administrative power, a respected missionary, Fr.van Lith, was appointed as the Catholic representative. He rejected any form of Government in which the Dutch continued to pull the strings. He argued that this would fail to serve the people's welfare and would ultimately be detrimental to the Dutch as well. No doubt van Lith was inspired by his concern about the future of the Church. He certainly felt that it was of the utmost importance that there be no doubt about the stance the Church should take if there were to be a conflict of interests:

Everybody knows that we missionaries wish to act as mediators... but if it should come to split so that we are compelled to take sides we shall take the side of the natives. ... Religion has inspired us with the highest ideal, which urges us to work as brothers for the freedom, the growth, the prosperity of Java in the Indies.[2]

Soon the *Perkumpulan Politik Katolik di Djawa*, the Catholic Political Association of Java, was formed. It presented a rather vague formulation of intent: 'to co-operate for the development and progress of the country'. But such a deliberately neutral statement allowed the *PPKD* to be recognised as a corporate body under the Dutch administration, free to organise itself, and qualified it for a seat on the Governor General's advisory *Volksraad*, Peoples Council. By such restraint the *PPKD* thus gained itself a position of useful influence as events unfolded.

One of this Association's outstanding leaders was I.J.Kasimo, a former pupil of Van Lith. He claimed the support of Catholic political and social doctrine in declaring, in 1932, that 'the kingdom of the Netherlands had a duty to grant self-determination and finally self-government to the Indonesian national communities as far as the public welfare is served'.[3] What 'self-government' should actually mean was a matter for debate in Catholic circles. The *Indische Katholieke Partij* regarded the maintenance of political ties with the Netherlands as imperative. The *PPKD* (later renamed the *Persatuan Politik Katolik Indonesia*, Political Association of Indonesian Catholics, *PPKI*) carefully refrained from formally pronouncing against the Dutch and was thus allowed to continue its activities when organisations which more overtly favoured complete political independence were suppressed.

Nonetheless, van Lith's and Kasimo's advocacy of Indonesian rights and interests had gained the attention of nationalist leaders, notably Sukarno, who was also favourably impressed by the dedication of Catholic missionaries, including their personal kindness to him during his years of exile on Flores, and at Banghahule (1935- 40). The nationalists also noted that the Catholic Church had appointed Fr.Sugyapranata, a Javanese priest, as Apostolic Vicar long before the Japanese occupation 1942-45 made indigenous leadership a necessity, and they valued the extensive social work organised by the church in its pastoral ministry, especially its educational provision, health care, and assistance to the poor.

The period 1945-50 between the Proclamation of Independence and the establishment of the Republic of Indonesia was one of considerable turbulence. Sukarno was prevailed upon[4] to abandon the one-party model had envisaged in the Proclamation Constitution and allow a political system in the style of Western democracies, which gave rise to numerous conflicting parties. During this time the Church played a significant role in the task of the building up of the nation, both politically and

socially. The ideology of *Pancasila* was approved as consistent with the Christian Gospel, and because its principles appeared to safeguard the continuing ministry of the Church.[5] The first article of the manifesto of the newly formed *Partai Katolik Republik Indonesia, PKRI* speaks of 'the will to defend the Republic and strengthen its condition' and it strove 'to preserve the unity of the people as necessary for progress and self-sufficiency'.[6] Bishop Sugyapranata called on Catholics to give the Republic their support and co-operation and promised that he would personally 'work together with people of all social classes to realise a permanent and prosperous independence'.[7] Many Catholic students (including Frans Seda who was later to head up the Catholic Party and remained influential even after its subsequent dissolution) volunteered to take up arms in the struggle against Dutch colonial rule, and a good many lost their lives. Kasimo paid tribute to the generous spirit of self-sacrifice on the part of Catholics for the sake of the nation.[8] He and Bishop Sugyapranata organised the first congress of any to be held at national level after 1945, *Kongres Umat Katolik Seluruh Indonesia (KUKSI)*, The Congress of the Indonesian Catholic Community. The Congress, which was attended on its first day by both Sukarno and Hatta (who were to become the first President and Vice President of the unitary State), achieved the fusion into one *Partai Katolik (PK)* all the existing RC parties which had arisen on various islands across the archipelago. When the *PK* held its first Congress at Semarang in 1950 (August 4-6th) its statutes declared belief in God, Catholic Social Doctrine, and *Pancasila* to be the basis of its operations and that its objective was 'to work for the progress of the Republic of Indonesia and the welfare of its people'. The *PK* carried out a unique policy in the Republic - people of all races and descents were allowed to become members of the Party as long as they were Indonesian citizens.

In the following years 1950-59, as the period of so-called 'Liberal Democracy' continued, the influence of the Catholic Church was greater than could be expected from the size of its membership. Through its educational provision the Church had ensured that Catholics were numerous among the administrative class, that is 'those with the technical, legal, and foreign language skills needed to run a modern state'[9], who were prominent partners with the Government in the practicalities of nation-building. The bishops also encouraged the fullest participation of all Catholics in political and social life, although their advice varied in some respects. Thus Bishop Sugyapranata invited participation in all mass organisations which acted in accordance with *Pancasila*, while a Pastoral Letter from seven Bishops of Java urged Catholics to be unified in their support for the Catholic Party, and the Bishops in Kalimantan (Borneo) supported the *Partai Persatuan Daya*, Dayak Union Party, which had done much to assist the indigenous tribes of that territory. However, the Bishops spoke with one concerned voice about the growing influence of Communism which they perceived as a form of 'neo-colonialism' and a destructive force, not only in Indonesia but in other Asian nations. They doubted Sukarno's ability to contain the growing Indonesian Communist Party (*Partai Komunis Indonesia, PKI*) within the co-operative relationship he envisaged.[10] They also jointly warned of the dangers of Capitalist exploitation, and of nationalism itself becoming a kind of religion.[11] In such objective commentaries the Church leadership expressed its prophetical ministry, while the ongoing pastoral care exercised by the Church at large for those with various human needs was a witness in itself to the all-embracing purpose of its mission.

There was a division of opinion in the body of the Church over Sukarno's plan to call a halt to the plethora of political parties which had arisen when the 1945 Proclamation Constitution was abandoned in favour of one upon which a western style democracy could be based. The failure of the resultant system to achieve a unified policy effecting national progress was evident. Sukarno's intention was to return to the 1945 Constitution and base upon it a system of so-called 'Guided Democracy' in which he, as leader of the national community, could be more directive. The *PK* opposed such a scheme, defended the effort that had been made to run the country on western lines, and pressed instead for amendments to the Constitution on which the attempt had been based to make it work more satisfactorily. Bishop Sugyapranata took the very opposite view including in his argument the reasoning that it was better thus to co-operate and 'fight communism and other enemies of the Church from inside the Government'. In the end the *PK* went along with Sukarno's proposal in order to preserve *Pancasila* as the basis of the country and thereby safeguard the Church's interests.

Unfortunately the period of Guided Democracy saw the mushrooming of bureaucracy, rampant corruption, and the economy slowing almost to a standstill.[12] It was also a time during which the *PKI*, openly supported by Sukarno who needed its help against Muslim groups favouring an

Islamic or a Federal State, grew in numbers and in political ambition with a Marxist vision of the re-ordering of society. The Bishops adopted a neutral position in respect of the political system as such[13] and gave their approval to the inclusion of a number of priests in the Cabinet and in the (Provisional) People's Consultative Assembly (*Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat (Sementara), MPRS).* But the growing assertiveness and influence of the Communist Party caused them and the Catholic Party leadership considerable alarm.

It was during this period that the United Nations, strongly influenced by the Government of the United States, gave approval to Indonesia taking control of West New Guinea.[14] The incorporation of this territory had been on the agenda of the *PK* from its inception and was also approved by Bishop Sugyapranata. He was critical of the position adopted by the *Katholieke Volks Partij KVP*, Catholic People's Party, in Holland which was in favour of the continuation of Dutch administration. In 1962 Frans Seda went to the Netherlands representing the *PK* to win the support of the *KVP* for the transference of sovereignty in accordance with the Bunker Plan proposed to the United Nations and emanating from the United States. The Bishops in the territory formally acknowledged this take-over as a legitimate development in a special Pastoral Letter to the Catholics living there, and professed confidence in the just ordering of the country's affairs under Indonesian authority.[15] Although this Letter did call upon the Government to have an eye 'for the special character and needs of the country and its peoples', the rights of the native Papuans were not defended as formerly those of the Indonesians had been against the Dutch. The subsequent deaths of at least 100,000 native Papuans as Indonesian sovereignty has been imposed by the 'Security Forces' of the Republic, and the persistence of the struggle for the political independence of West New Guinea by the indigenous *Organisasi Papua Merdeka OPM*, Free Papua Movement, indicates that the Bishops' appraisal of the situation had its shortcomings and that their confidence in the fairness of Indonesian rule was over generous.[16]

But in the matter of having due respect for the dignity of the original inhabitants the Church itself has consistently given a good example with an 'integrated pastoral programme' which, down the succeeding years, has been admirably respectful of indigenous culture while at the same time providing education, health care, and, in a number of very practical ways, offering help to the various tribes to cope positively with the new circumstances into which they have been thrust.[17] The local Catholic Church has also tried to protect the people against exploitation and abuse by agencies of Government or commerce. For example, during the 1970's and 1980's the Church was actively opposed to the exploitative behaviour of logging companies protected by Indonesian officials in the Asmat region, and in 1995 the Church formally presented the Government with a Report alleging gross human rights violations by 'Security Forces' in the area of Timika.[18] In 1996 the Church acted as mediator in negotiations between the Indonesian authorities and leaders of the *OPM* who had taken international hostages in a bid to draw world attention to the negative experiences of the native inhabitants since Indonesia took charge, and to their persisting aspiration towards political self-determination. Currently Church leaders are involved in ongoing deliberations between the international mining company Freeport-RI and the indigenous people living in the vicinity of its mammoth operation at Tembagapura.[19]

The Church has been subject to some criticism for its accommodation to Indonesian jurisdiction over what is now called *Irian Jaya* but its efforts on behalf of the people's welfare have also to be acknowledged, bearing in mind its concern to to be politically non-partisan and to have continued freedom carry out what must be considered as its primary task of preaching the Gospel and leading all people into a deeper relationship with God. Locally the Church attends to a variety of personal and social needs and is appraised of the political aspirations of the people. However, it declines to give support to the armed struggle of the *OPM* to the extent of refraining even from participation in its deliberations over strategy. Such involvement is considered to be both inappropriate in respect of the Church's mission and to put at risk the substantial work the Church is able to undertake for the sake of the people living in the territory, both native and migrant.

The events of September 1965 in which six generals and a lieutenant were murdered in the environs of Jakarta remain a puzzle.[20] There are differing interpretations among analysts although the prevailing view in Indonesia is that it was an attempted coup by the Communist Party, *PKI*.[21] There is no doubt that Suharto took control of the situation that had arisen, in a remarkably short period of time was able to establish the *Orde Baru*, New Order Government, and has exercised undisputed leadership of the Republic as its second President ever since. This was achieved in part by the bloody

suppression of the *PKI* involving the murder or imprisonment of all supposed 'sympathisers'. At least half a million people were to perish. The bishops were out of the country in attendance at the Second Vatican Council at the time of the alleged 'coup' but in a letter addressed 'To our Fellow Countrymen' in 1966 they expressed their distress at the 'many victims' and asked pardon for 'any negligence or irresponsibility of theirs' which might have contributed to the disaster. They called for the principles of *Pancasila* to be honoured as offering a good basis for a tolerant and inclusive society. It is evident from this and other statements made at that time[22] that while the hierarchy clearly had misgivings about the manner in which the *Orde Baru* was established and by which it seemed to be operating they were relieved by its opposition to communism, and its control of Islamist assertion, and wholeheartedly supported its proposed development programme which seemed to offer practical remedies for the nations economic and social ills. The Catholic Party, however, was quite open about its participation in the destruction of the *PKI*, and about its backing for Suharto and what it regarded as 'a return to the Rule of Law, and a clear and consistent adherence to the *Pancasila* and the 1945 Constitution'.[23] Clearly both the bishops and the Catholic politicians considered that the developments which had taken place would be to the advantage of the Church, safeguarding its place in and its mission to Indonesian society through its various pastoral institutions.

In due course, with the dissolution of all the existing political parties in the amalgamation required by the *Orde Baru* in 1973 [24] and the negative effect this had on Catholic influence in national affairs, the politicians had cause to ponder the wisdom of their judgement.[25] Likewise, the laws introduced in 1978, 1984 and 1988 prohibiting proselytism and foreign funding, and proscribing the activities of foreign missionaries, brought the hierarchy into a heightened sense of the continuing vulnerability of the Church.[26] Subsequently the growing influence of the Muslim majority upon national politics and in social relations have made many in the Catholic community feel still more insecure. It has further convinced them of the importance of the Church adopting a co-operative rather than a confrontational relationship with the Government if it to remain free and able to undertake its primarily religious task, sustain its wide-ranging pastoral care (particularly its educational institutions and public health provision), and retain some influence in the development of the nation in accordance with Gospel principles. The Bishops have therefore taken pains to emphasise the spiritual purposes of the Church, its desire for social tolerance and harmony, its promotion of humanitarian values, and its desire to contribute to the up-building of the nation. They have avoided explicit political directives, eschewed political partisanship, and warned against the politicisation of religion.[27] But they have invited Catholics, Indonesian citizens in general, and the Government in particular, to consider the wisdom and humanity of some of the regimes' policies and to reflect on the state of the nation.[28] Meanwhile the Church has continued to grow numerically, in its pastoral institutions, and in indigenous leadership, although there is still a need for foreign missionaries and its general situation could not be described as 'secure'.[29]

It is within this context that the response of the Catholic Church in Indonesia to the situation of East Timor must be appraised, giving consideration to its threefold task as pastor, prophet, and partner in nation-building.

Indonesian armed forces entered the territory on December 7th 1975, and on July 17th 1976 it was formally incorporated as the 27th Province of the Republic. This annexation has not been acknowledged by the United Nations which still regards Portugal as the administering authority in its former colony. Furthermore, a vigorous resistance to Indonesian sovereignty has persisted among the people and the situation in the country has been one of continual conflict, sustained until the present time, though varying in expression and intensity. Human suffering has been extensive with great loss of life. The Indonesian Government's efforts to achieve East Timorese, and international, acceptance of its rule through various developmental measures promising economic and social benefit to the people have been offset by the repressive and exploitative nature of its administration which has been characterised by widespread human rights violations.

The Catholic Church of Indonesia became involved in the pastoral care of the East Timorese people after the 'Integration' had been declared in mid 1976. This care was effected through the supply of material aid and the deployment of church personnel to serve in the territory itself and attend to the needs of refugees in the neighbouring Dioceses of West Timor, especially Atambua. Humanitarian relief was generated in the Church throughout Indonesia, and also evoked by the Church from Catholic relief agencies in other countries.[30] In 1983 the Bishops Conference of Indonesia expressed their distress at the terrible experience of the East Timorese in a letter to the newly appointed Apostolic Administrator Mgr.C.F.X.Belo who had attended their assembly and given a first hand report. They expressed solidarity in the fraternity of

faith, promised efforts towards the achievement of a just and peaceful settlement, and pledged further assistance in matters of education, labour resources, and social welfare.[31] Priests, religious, and laity from Indonesia continue to work in East Timor alongside foreign missionaries and in co-operation with indigenous church personnel, and training of seminarians and lay pastoral assistants from East Timor is offered at Diocesan institutions in Indonesia.

However, the Indonesian pastors do not enjoy the complete confidence of the East Timorese faithful. They are perceived as agents of Government policy, as partners in the assertion of Indonesian sovereignty, as co-operators in the building of the Republic on Timorese soil, whether or not this be intentional on their part. This attitude on the part of East Timorese towards Indonesian Church personnel is traceable to the earliest years of their ministry in the territory and is still evident.[32] The proposal urged on occasion by Indonesian Bishops, and endorsed by leading Indonesian Catholic laity, that the Diocese of Dili should belong to their Conference so that their assistance in the local church's work for the people could be more direct and effective is susceptible to the interpretation that it is accordance with the Government's wishes to achieve a real (as opposed to a claimed) political unity between East Timor and Indonesia.[33] Some leading figures in the Church in East Timor have put such an interpretation upon the deployment in 1976 of Fr.Anton Pain Ratu SVD, a leading ecclesiastic in West Timor and subsequently Bishop of the Atambua Diocese, as a 'bridge-builder' between the East Timorese church leaders and the Indonesian authorities, especially the military.[34] It is also supported by the fact that President Suharto himself made a direct appeal to the Bishops in 1994 for their help in solving 'the problem of East Timor', which, he said, 'would otherwise cause harm to everyone - including the Church'.[35]

Apart from this indirect partnership in nation building, and the consistent expression of a desire for a just and peaceful settlement of the persisting conflict in and in respect of the territory, the Church in Indonesia has generally avoided becoming involved in the issue of East Timor's political status. There are several reasons for this posture which certainly evokes negative criticism from within the Church in East Timor and elsewhere in the Catholic community world wide, as it does also from many people who are concerned for the welfare of the East Timorese but are not members of the Catholic Church.

One reason is that, despite the internal communications network which exists within the Catholic ecclesial structures by which information can be exchanged, the Church in Indonesia has not been as fully appraised of the situation in East Timor as would be desirable. This is in part due to the isolation of the territory brought about by the Indonesian occupation, and partly to the control over the dissemination of news and analysis in the Republic by the present Government and its agencies. The result of this is that the perception of the situation by many in the Church aligns with that of the Indonesian secular authorities and is therefore at variance with the presentation of the state of affairs by those East Timorese who are not in thrall to the present regime. The most significant aspect of this is the widely held belief that East Timorese efforts towards independent nationhood - or even towards autonomy in local affairs - are the activity of 'political separatists' and judged accordingly.[36]

Another reason is to be discovered in the Indonesian Church's traditional opposition to Communism. Besides the ideological conflict between Catholicism and Marxism perceived by the institutional Church as a whole the Indonesian Church leadership has historical cause be concerned about any possible Communist assertion. The blood bath that took place during the suppression of the *PKI* 1965-66 haunts all Indonesians to this day, and the Government's intimation of communist insurgence in East Timor undoubtedly stirred anxiety amongst hierarchy and faithful as in the population at large. Also to be considered was whether the maintenance of friendly relations with Western powers supportive of much-needed Indonesian development would be detrimentally affected by any inference that the Bishops were supportive of left-wing forces. Certainly the hierarchy were careful to distance themselves from any such interpretation of the 'fraternal solidarity' they expressed towards the East Timorese when pledging their spiritual and humanitarian support.[37]

Then there are cultural reasons, such as the Javanese deference towards authority, and the traditional Indonesian manner of resolving social problems through *Musyawara-Mufakat*, a process of 'consultation and consensus' that has its origins in village life and was advocated by Sukarno, and subsequently adopted in the Republic, as the appropriate method for national government. In accordance with such customs direct challenge of authority is unacceptable, dialogue is encouraged, and any criticisms should not be aired publicly but be presented discreetly via an ascending scale of government representatives, civil or military, from local via regional and provincial to national level. The Church has fallen in with this 'Indonesian way' of conducting public affairs.

The significant part played by the community of the Catholic Church in the achievement of Indonesian independence has meant that its members take a pride in their national identity and in the ideals and purposes of the Republic. They are ever-conscious, as every Indonesian is, of the fragility of the union

between the disparate groups of people inhabiting the sprawling archipelago, and correspondingly anxious about any political movement which seems to threaten its disruption. Antipathy within East Timor to an Indonesian vision of political unity is regarded as a menace to national stability, a sickness that could spread to other disaffected groups and so threaten the welfare of the nation as a whole. This is an anxiety the Government's presentation of the situation has not dispelled, and may indeed be said to have encouraged.

There are, too, ecclesial reasons, both theoretical and practical. Thus a theological view has been expressed according to which, in Indonesian society, the ministry of prophecy should be exercised by the believing community as a whole through ecclesiastical provisions emulating the *Musyawara-Mufakat* process, rather than by outspoken individuals or even the Conference of Bishops. It is also opined that if the Bishops were to be critical of the Authorities' stance and actions in respect of East Timor they could not rely upon the support of the laity who are concerned for their own security in economic and social affairs. In fact the Church has, through pastoral letters and private communications criticised certain trends within and consequences of Government policy such as corruption, and the growing gap between rich and poor, but in these matters it is able to quote published Government intentions. However, in the case of East Timor the Church would not have the same theoretical backing, beyond an appeal to the general principle of social justice expressed in *Pancasila*, and to the traditional ideal of *Gotong Royong*, Mutual Help, which can be equally well quoted by the Government in its own favour.[38] It has also been argued that the Vatican would object if the Indonesian Church was too directly involved in the affairs of the Church in East Timor which does not belong to the Conference of Indonesian Bishops[39]. Of course, there is also the view that the proper concern of the Church should be its religious task, not the resolution of political issues. Although it has been argued that the response of the Church to the situation of East Timor is a measure of the evangelical fidelity of the Church it has also been admitted that for Catholics to challenge Government policy would demand 'very real sacrifices', and that it should be remembered 'we are not a heroic community, simply a cross-section of society, weak and fearful like most people'.[40]

Finally there is the purely practical consideration as to whether adverse comment in respect of Government policy on the part of the Catholic Church would actually have any effect, other than a negative one.[41] There is always the risk that public criticism of the Government would result in the curtailment of the assistance which the Catholic community in Indonesia is able to offer the Church and people of East Timor, and, indeed, to the people of Indonesia.

Recently, however, the hierarchy have been unanimous in their recommendation that the presence of Indonesian troops be reduced in East Timor, even withdrawn altogether, and have given emphasis to the importance of 'heeding the real aspirations of the East Timorese' and creating 'a social milieu in which the people of East Timor feel that their cultural, religious and historical identity is recognised and safeguarded'. 'It is our fervent hope', they declared in their 1997 Lenten Pastoral Letter, 'that all parties concerned make a profound introspection and ask why, after twenty years of Integration, some East Timorese have yet to live it'. Cardinal Darmaatmadja has also publicly criticised the 'Security Approach' used by the authorities in East Timor, noting that it has signally 'failed to reduce tensions (or) address underlying problems', and called for an 'open dialogue' inclusive of all East Timorese opinion, so that a resolution might be found and lest the young generation in East Timor 'inherit only hate'.[42] Of late, a strikingly direct criticism of the regime's policy in East Timor has been contributed by other well-regarded leaders in the Indonesian Church.[43]

An evaluation of the ministry of the Church in Indonesia in respect of its three inter-related roles as outlined may be usefully attempted, bearing in mind that it is the Church itself which is best able to undertake such a task, and indeed makes continual effort in this regard.

The Pastoral work of the Church is wide ranging and has grown in extent and effectiveness, responding to the various challenges which its situation has presented and addressing the integral welfare of all people in Indonesian society in respect of both their present and future needs, in this world or beyond it.

The Church in Indonesia has been a significant Partner in the building of the Nation, and continues to be so. But although there are entirely admirable features of that engagement there has also been identification with secular national ambitions, and a degree of partisanship in some political issues. The attitude of the Church towards Indonesian progress contrasts strikingly with its response to the aspirations of the Papuan peoples of West New Guinea, and to those of the East Timorese. The motivation in these instances has primarily been the desire to ensure the continuation of the Church's work, but this cannot justify participation in the perpetration of injustice, albeit unwitting.

The role of Prophet is one that is recognised to be 'an authentic and essential aspect of a living and dynamic Church' [44]. The difficulty lies in finding how to exercise that ministry effectively and fruitfully. In present day Indonesian society a confrontational posture is of doubtful merit. Working within the cultural

norms is clearly appropriate. It should also be remembered that an important expression of the prophetical ministry is 'heroically realising the positive'.[45] The many pastoral institutions established by the Church in Indonesia, and the devoted care of countless needy people consistently and courageously exercised by Church personnel in difficult and often dangerous circumstances - and without regard to their religious beliefs or political ideologies - is just such an impressive witness to the values of the Gospel and to the love of God for humankind.

Nonetheless the question once asked by an Indonesian Jesuit priest in respect of his Church's response to East Timor is still pertinent, and surely of wider application:

"The decision we make - to speak out or not to speak - will determine in large measure what we will be as a Church. Are we another bloc in society seeking prosperity and influence, or are we a religious community led by the Gospel. Right now we've got them mixed up".[46] There are many in the Church today who are critical of what they see as 'the defence of the institution, the neglect of justice'.[47]

Certainly the survival of the Church must be considered, not for its own sake but for the world's. But does not the story and the teaching of Jesus call for a readiness to give all for the love of God, and that self-sacrifice is in fact the way to eternal life? Is the Church in Indonesia, or anywhere else, willing to take that risk?

P.A.Smythe
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